

23 November 1976

At Carter behest, Bush will quit as CIA head

Washington—George Bush, acting on word from President-elect Carter, said yesterday he will step aside as director of central intelligence with Mr. Carter's inauguration January 20.

The former Texas congressman and former chairman of the Republican National Committee became the Ford administration's first Cabinet-level official to fix his departure day. In fact his office is the only one at that level for which a formal announcement has more than ritual significance.

The directorship of central intelligence is not regarded as a political appointment in the sense that other Cabinet offices are. Mr. Bush, however, is a political figure, and most advance speculation outside the government made his departure a certainty.

It was not certain that he regarded it that way. Before he briefed Mr. Carter at Plains, Ga., last week—their second such meeting—he told reporters he did not expect to discuss his future.

Afterward, however, he refused to say whether the subject came up. Sources in Mr. Carter's transition force confirmed the obvious yesterday: The President-elect had let Mr. Bush know the new administration wanted to start with a clean slate.

Mr. Bush will leave 10 days short of a year on the job. Most of that period has been spent restoring internal and public confidence in the Central Intelligence Agency after the disclosure of widespread CIA abuses of its power.

Apart from supporting reforms in the CIA and pledging less interference with foreign governments, Mr. Carter has indicated he expects the agency to concentrate more on analysis and less on spying. He had no objections to Mr. Bush in that regard, one source said, but felt that the present director was identified too much

as a politician to remain in a Democratic administration.

The CIA announcement yesterday increased speculation about the identity of Mr. Bush's successor. The name most often mentioned was that of James R. Schlesinger, who was briefly CIA director and then secretary of defense in the Ford administration. But no sources claimed to have inside knowledge on that score.

Mr. Bush, who is 52 years old, became a millionaire in the oil business while he was still young. He served two terms in the House as a Republican representative from Houston between two unsuccessful campaigns for the Senate.

In 1972 he was assigned as ambassador to the United Nations by former President Nixon. Before Mr. Nixon's resignation in 1974, he became chairman of the Republican National Committee. Mr. Bush was in that assignment when Mr. Ford, soon after taking office, sent him to China as head of the U.S. Liaison Mission.

He returned to Washington to take over the CIA after Mr. Ford, citing tensions in his national security team, fired Mr. Schlesinger as secretary of defense and William E. Colby, a career intelligence officer, as head of the CIA.

A spokesman for the agency said yesterday Mr. Bush has not made up his mind about his future. The formal announcement said merely that Mr. Bush had informed Mr. Ford and Mr. Carter of his decision and had "pledged his continuing full assistance" to the latter "during the transition period."

Suggestions for drastic changes in the CIA were offered yesterday by Ray S. Cline, a former deputy director of the agency, in a new book, "Secrets, Spies and Scholars."

Among his proposals were de-emphasis on spying, which would be carried on by small groups hidden in other agencies, and greater emphasis on semi-public research. Mr. Cline would gather CIA analytical units in a new Central Institute of Foreign Affairs Research.